The details of the proposal will be made public when the revised draft legislation is tabled in the Houses of Parliament.

Purchase of overseas oil reserves

†529. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government contemplate to purchase oil reserves in various countries and to cooperate with Indian companies in this regard;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made for exploration of oil reserves in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AiYAR): (a) and (b) To enhance the country's energy security, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), as well as other national oil companies in association with OVL, have been pursuing acquisition of equity oil abroad, as well as acquisition abroad of oil and gas exploration acreages and producing properties.

Currently national oil companies such as OVL, IOC, OIL and GAIL have Participating Interests in oil and gas projects located in Vietnam, Sudan, Russia, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Libya, Syria, Australia and the Ivory Coast.

(c) The exploratory efforts of the national and private/joint venture oil companies have established a balance recoverable oil plus oil equivalent of gas (O+OEG) of the order of 1658 million metric tonnes, as on 1.4.2004.

Artificial scarcity of gas in Delhi

530. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that LPG agencies in Delhi, in connivance with the gas companies, created artificial scarcity of gas refills before and after 31st October, 2004 when price hike was expected and Indian Customers Service helplines could not be reached;

(b) whether Government propose to investigate the matter to take penal action against those responsible therefor; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.